

To: Universal Health Plan Governing Board

From: Chuck Sheketoff

I was a member of the Universal Health Care Task Force and want to address two issues that we fell short of and that I hope you will address.

Talking Health Care and Financing

The Task Force did not have the financial resources to engage experts in helping us talk about the need for universal health care and the particular health care issues and financing issues that are complex and often misunderstood, making it hard to build public support for the change to universal health care and changes in how people pay for it.

The Topos Partnership (<https://www.topospartnership.com/about/>), a research-based communications consulting firm with linguists and cultural anthropologists who use cognitive and social sciences to help groups and candidates change the way people think. Topos figures out/diagnoses those deeply held understandings - "the mental models" they call them - the simple representations of a much more complex system that people use as a shortcut for understanding complex stuff (such as "the heart is a pump" that lay people use to describe what the heart does).

Put another way, TOPOS works at figuring out and focusing on the deeply held understandings that are pervasive, unquestioned, and have the power to shape people's views and behavior. It is at that level - what they call the "cultural common sense" - where policy debates win or lose in legislatures and at the ballot box.

A good example of their work helping for a group trying to bring about policy change that is groundbreaking and where they actually won in a red state, is their work in 2019 and 2020, with the Missouri Organizing and Voter Engagement Collaborative (MOVE) as they embarked on an ambitious effort to have conversations designed to transform relationships in Missouri, and create a unified movement of urban and rural, black and white, poor and working class people across the state. TOPOS observations of these transformational conversations (mostly through canvassing), identified narrative strategies that mobilize. TOPOS then worked with MOVE to develop a narrative platform to support all their efforts. In addition to beginning the hard work of building a lasting movement, MOVE was able to win Medicaid expansion at the ballot box using a narrative that TOPOS and MOVE co-created.

I encourage the board to set aside funds to hire TOPOS early in your process to figure out how to talk with the lay public about the policy and practices changes and the current financial mechanisms and the changes in how health care is funded under a universal system. I have attached a draft proposal to give you a ballpark (it is out of date) of the costs and a good explanation of TOPOS's process.

Name the Greed and Address it in the Health Care Morass/Complex

Because we don't have a health care system¹, but instead have a health care morass or complex, greed has become widely prevalent.

As Task Force members heard ad nauseam from me, I could get an MRI of my shoulder for one-tenth the price my insurance company would pay if I scheduled it through my direct care provider who is not tied to the insurance industry.

What that fact shows is that the cost of MRIs in the health care data that actuaries use are widely inflated up to tenfold (or more?) and that greed is prevalent throughout health care. From state-supported medical schools charging too much for tuition, to insurance, profit and nonprofit hospitals, and pharmaceuticals factoring in large profit margins and insane costs, the actuaries need to be directed to adjust the data sets they are using for the no- or limited-greed that should be the goal under universal care.

Your obligation from the get go must be to name the greed and address it throughout the health care industry's practices and policies. Even if you do the work with TOPOS, the public will have a difficult time supporting the changes if greed is still baked into the universal health care system you design.

¹ It is not a "system" because health care components – principles, procedures, services, values, financing – were not all designed to work together to succeed in accomplishing shared goals and values.



MEMO

To: Chuck Sheketoff
From: Topos Partnership
Re: The Case for Universal Health
Date: April 16, 2021

Chuck,

Thanks so much for reaching out. The work you are doing to establish universal health care in Oregon is an incredible opportunity, and yet, as we've discussed, one fraught with challenges. Since it is likely that the situation is ever evolving, we've put together ideas that could address a range of research objectives, for example:

- Exploratory research on how Oregonians view state government's role, efficacy, responsiveness to the people, etc.,
- Message development research to make the case for universal health care in Oregon, taking into account objections people may have about government more generally,
- Explanatory messaging, simplifying models to help explain/build support for financing universal health care,
- And so on.

While making the case for financing is the ultimate end goal, it is likely that some preliminary exploration will allow us to uncover hidden obstacles and opportunities that will make the final message development much stronger.

In the notes that follow, we introduce our approach and our team, share some brief case studies, and provide ideas for approaches to this research. We believe the best research is the result of close collaboration in design, and we look forward to rolling up our sleeves in partnership with you to arrive at the most productive workplan.

TOPOS TEAM AND EXPERIENCE

The Topos Partnership was the inspiration of three colleagues with different professional backgrounds, but a shared vision for how to do the hard work of lasting culture change. We recognized early on that too often public opinion researchers focus on snapshot-in-time findings, and therefore develop strategies that reinforce problematic public understanding rather than lead people to new understanding. Short-term approaches might manipulate enough people to win one election, but it does not engage people in civic action nor does it lead to *lasting* improvements in society.

We believe that real, lasting change requires paradigm shifts. We focus on the level of the Cultural Common Sense, the deeply held understandings that are pervasive, unquestioned, and have the power to shape people's *views and behavior*. For example:

- “I work hard, pay taxes and get nothing, while others get a free ride” is a deeply held and widely shared idea – across the political spectrum. It also bolsters racism, classism, anti-poor and anti-immigrant sentiments that undermine equitable policies and action, all while convincing people that government does nothing for them.
- “Government is wasteful and inefficient” is similarly part of the Cultural Common Sense and leads to support for privatization. This is a key part of the case against publicly-financed health care, as critics scare people into worrying that faceless, uncaring, incompetent bureaucrats will ration health care or even make health care decisions, not doctors.
- The widely held default understanding that “racism is solely about interpersonal interactions” blinds people to historical, structural and systemic racism dynamics.
- “We have to live within our means” is a common belief that constrains thought and action, even among many self-described liberals—so that more revenue is not even in consideration.

We could cite many other examples, but the point is that the Cultural Common Sense is the level at which policy debates are won and lost in legislatures and at the ballot box.

We identify barriers that are embedded in the Cultural Common Sense so that we can develop strategies to introduce ideas that will allow people to see the issue in a new way and empower active engagement.

- Our work goes far beyond measuring how people passively respond to messaging.
- Our insights have implications for communications campaigns, but also for organizing, power-building, community-driven policy development, advocacy and so on.

- We develop strategies that are durable and that embolden movements.
- Working in concert with grassroots advocates and issue experts as we develop the research and resulting strategy ensures that we stay true to what communicators need to inspire and empower their communities.

The approach we take raises the bar on what the research must accomplish.

Most narrative research relies on simple agreement or self-assessments of the convincingness of an idea. What these methods can't tell you is what people "hear" in the message, whether they will remember it tomorrow or in ten minutes, what actions or conclusions it leads them to, whether it shifts, in any manner, the way they previously thought about the issue, and whether they are likely to act in new ways as a result. In short, it can't tell whether any of the candidate messages has the potential to move the needle in understanding or behavior.

Our approach raises the bar considerably. For a concept to be considered successful, it must prove sticky, durable, and transferable. People exposed to the idea must not only be able to describe it in their own words, but they also must be able to (and choose to) apply it to new contexts, and to persuade others to recognize its value as a common-sense way of seeing the issue. Finally, there should be evidence that people see in this concept implications for a new way of acting.

Meeting these requirements is much more difficult than getting people to give a message the thumbs up. Most messages we try are misunderstood, backfire, are quickly forgotten or don't lead to support and action. To truly understand the impact of messages, Topos has worked hard over time to develop new research tools. Melding diverse approaches and intellectual traditions (cultural anthropology, cognitive linguistics, public opinion research), the Topos partners have developed and rely upon a variety of methods designed to elicit deep insights, including ethnography, cognitive elicitations, Talkback Testing, Virtual Community Forums, Argument Lab, and framing surveys, among others. Our experience shows that a mix of methods always results in more robust insights than one tool alone.

We have successfully applied this approach to topics ranging from environmental issues to racial justice, economic policy, labor unions, public budgets, education, job quality, government, health, the food system and so forth. We have explored attitudes with audiences as diverse as rural farmers and urban homeless, in situations that range from inner city Baltimore to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

To demonstrate the broad applicability of this approach, we include a range of examples from our more recent work:

Rethinking the budget narrative

The success of just about every issue requires adequate funding, and yet, advocates for most social issues are loath to advocate for revenue. Recognizing the breadth of the cultural problem, a group of visionary funders came together to support a multi-year, multi-state and national effort to understand the dynamics that undermine public support for progressive budget policies. In addition to recommending fundamental changes in discourse and identifying cultural clusters to attend to, this work has continued to evolve into strategies that frame revenue policies as economic policies and equity policies. In one state, for example, understanding of the regressive nature of the tax code jumped 17 percentage points, leading to a long-term policy win. In addition to research in multiple states over several years, Topos is currently leading an anti-austerity learning community that will leverage existing knowledge and identify new, effective strategies.

Transformational Conversations—A cross-race-class-geographic movement for change

One of many tools in the Topos toolkit is observational research to assess the efficacy of social movements in real world situations. In 2019 and 2020, Topos worked with the Missouri Organizing and Voter Engagement Collaborative (MOVE) as they embarked on an ambitious effort to have conversations designed to transform relationships in Missouri, and create a unified movement of urban and rural, black and white, poor and working class people across the state. Our observations of these transformational conversations (mostly through canvassing), identified narrative strategies that mobilize. We then worked with MOVE to develop a narrative platform to support all their efforts. In addition to beginning the hard work of building a lasting movement, MOVE was able to win Medicaid expansion at the ballot box using a narrative that we co-created.

Engaging Latinx voters

The Latinx population is significant and growing, and yet participation in electoral politics has lagged behind other populations. Working across 4 states (AZ, CO, FL and NM) with funding from the Civic Participation Action Fund, Topos conducted hundreds of ethnographic interviews with Latinx Americans (in English and Spanish) to develop profiles of the Latinx voting population, with engagement strategies for each profile. One of the many insights from these profiles is debunking the myth that apathy is the problem. Our research finds that the opposite is true—some feel so strongly about the importance of voting that they don't want to make a mistake. Campaigns stressing the importance of voting backfire with this profile. Deploying our strategy in AZ in 2018 boosted Latinx turnout by 5.8 percentage points, 36% more effective than the standard GOTV intervention.

Getting Race-Dismissive Kansans on Board with Racial Equity Policies

Kansas Action for Children sought to promote a new race-forward policy agenda to advance racial equity, but recognized that the political and demographic make-up of the state made the communications challenge daunting, and required a new and more effective approach. Building on our own earlier work investigating cultural patterns around the state of Kansas, particularly in relation to taxes and public spending, Topos conducted research and message testing to identify possible paths forward. The resulting analysis – focusing on “race dismissive” populations and how to reach them – represented a breakthrough for the organization, and laid out a strategy for appealing more effectively to broad audiences in the state. Just as importantly, staff themselves reflected that the process of working with Topos on the project was meaningful for them in terms of how they think about their own work and goals.

"The process of working through the Topos insights on racism and racial equity, having conversations with the Topos team and our table of partner-advisors, wrestling with our own questions and insecurities was as important to the transformation as the end-result report. In fact, I don't think we would've been able to make the greatest use of the lessons learned if not for the road we traveled down together in the process designed by the Topos team."

A. McKay, DEI practitioner and advisor,
Former CEO, Kansas Action for Children

Supplanting the trickle-down mental model

When we first starting working with a Ford-Foundation job quality coalition in 2011, advocates were stuck in a debate between “sympathy for the working poor” and “job killers.” Common wisdom among strategists was that “trickle down” was no longer influential because people scoff at the term in focus groups. With our expertise in cognitive models, we were able to demonstrate that the trickle down mental model continued to influence public thinking, even though the term did not. We recommended a strategy designed to trigger Keynesian thinking by framing the job quality policy agenda as being about “economy-boosting jobs” that allow money to circulate through and “boost” communities and the economy. This approach has been influential around the country, including among minimum wage and paid leave campaigns and even incorporated into a State of the Union address. While there is still a long way to go, we now regularly hear media coverage and the public voicing Keynesian models as they communicate about the economy.

Gender, power and identity in the context of the Kavanaugh hearings

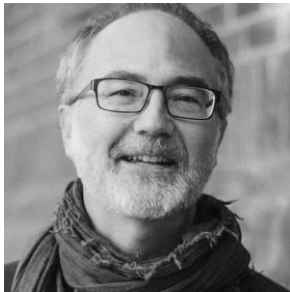
Recently cited in the [Washington Post](#), our [research for GALvanize USA](#) was designed to understand how and why conservative-leaning women respond to dog whistles for hostile sexism—using the Ford-Kavanaugh event as a window into how they think about gender equity, power, and their own identity. We listened to a politically influential population—non-college-educated white women who live in conservative locales. Their voices, both in articulating a defense of men and family as well as empowering themselves and their daughters, help us understand the opportunities for reaching them and the work that needs to be done to win their support for solutions that advance progress for all.

The Importance of Language: Models, Metaphors and Terms

In every project we attend to the nuance of language, whether it is developing an explanatory model, identifying a helpful metaphor or refining expert terminology. Topos principals have been at the center of developing key terms such as brain architecture and toxic stress, glossaries of terminology for organizations such as AARP, brand frameworks for global brands such as United Way Worldwide, and models such as “shrinking the industry” as a way to invite dialogue on sex trade policy objectives for the NoVo Foundation. We’ve identified deeply engrained models that inhibit progress on issues as challenging as mental health for the ACLU, and health equity for the City of Louisville.

THE TEAM

Our work with you would rely on multiple team members—each with different perspectives and areas of expertise that combine for a thoughtful end product.



Axel Aubrun, Ph.D., Co-founder, is a psychological anthropologist who focuses on long-term culture change. He has pioneered a number of innovative research methods designed to elicit unique insights, including Talkback testing. He has presented before notable audiences including the White House and the AFL-CIO, and has authored articles in publications ranging from the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute to Non-Profit Quarterly. Aubrun is a graduate of Amherst College, Oxford University, and the University of California, San Diego.



Isaiah Bailey, Senior Fellow: Isaiah brings a rich understanding of race politics, political communication, and education policy. He led pioneering research at Project Mosaic, the Groundwork Collaborative, to identify the unique economic perspectives and mental models of Black and Latinx communities. And he worked to bring various education stakeholders together through his innovative work with the Tennessee Department of Education and Vanderbilt University. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond (B.A.), the University of Michigan (M.P.P.; M.A.), and is a doctoral candidate at UCLA.



Meg Bostrom, Co-founder: Meg is a veteran communications strategist with a unique perspective resulting from her rich and varied experiences as communicator, pollster, advertising agency executive, and political consultant. Bostrom has advised prominent campaigns, including Clinton '92, as well as a number of Senate, Congressional and Gubernatorial campaigns. She has researched public opinion and analyzed communications strategies on a variety of social issues, including some of the earliest groundbreaking work on reframing poverty, children's issues, the economy, environment, government, human rights, race/ethnicity, and the working poor, among others. She has developed winning strategies for national and global brands such as United Way Worldwide and Carefirst among others. She is a sought-after speaker and communicator, whose work has appeared in publications ranging from the Washington Post to the Journal of Pain Management.



Nalleli Reyes Garcia, Analyst: An Indigenous immigrant from Michoacán, Mexico, Nalleli arrived in the United States at the age of three. Her status as a former undocumented person led to her interest and involvement in several political campaigns where she learned the art of canvassing and the importance of advocacy. She became interested in research when she was selected as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and developed an award winning research project that addressed voting behavior and political perception among Native American undergraduate students. Nalleli holds a BA in Native

American Studies, with a minor in Political Science, from the University of New Mexico and continues to be an outspoken advocate in her community.



Jamila Gilmore, M.Sc., is a sociologist with a research background in race, inequality, and liberation movements in the U.S. and Cuba. Jamila has led Topos’ observational research in MO, MI and AZ, and has been the senior analyst on notable Topos projects including a national survey of American opinion on prostitution, engaging low-propensity Latinx voters, and developing unique, local cultural narratives for populations across Colorado. Gilmore is a recent graduate of Brown University.



Joseph Grady, Ph.D., co-founder, is a cognitive linguist who is sought after globally for his expertise on metaphor. He has spent nearly twenty years exploring Americans’ attitudes and beliefs in the public interest sphere, has helped develop a number of innovative approaches to research and message testing, has addressed audiences from local organizations to Congressional staff, and has authored a number of nationally influential articles and reports, on topics from the challenges of discussing inequality to the need for nonprofits to fill the “explanation gap.” He received his Ph.D. from the University of

California at Berkeley and is a former Senior Fellow at The Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy.



Mariya Taher, MSW, MFA, Narrative Liaison: Mariya has worked in the anti-gender violence field for ten years in the areas of research, policy, program development and direct service. In 2015, she co-founded Sahiyo, an international nonprofit, to use the power of storytelling to empower Asian communities to end female genital cutting. She is a prolific, award winning writer whose articles have been featured on NPR, Ms. Magazine, Huffington Post, Brown Girl Magazine, Solstice Literary Magazine, the San Francisco Examiner, and more.

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE

Racism and bias continue to hold people back in every area of life – from health to education, employment, housing and criminal justice – and tensions related to race continue to infect public discourse on every policy issue in the U.S.. To help promote racial justice, Topos seeks to understand how various populations think and feel about questions related to race, and to develop communication approaches that combat inequities, division and hopelessness. We maintain that true progress depends on finding constructive common ground that explicitly acknowledges systemic barriers and injustices—and the need to dismantle them—while defusing the defensiveness and resentment that currently derail so much dialog.

At Topos, deep listening and transcending or bridging differences are in our DNA. We are cultural anthropologists, cognitive linguists, opinion researchers, civic engagement practitioners and activists. Our professional orientation is all about understanding culture and deeply held world views, including pervasive and implicit racial biases, in order to shift dialog in constructive directions.

This perspective deeply informs our methodology, which includes connecting with people who are often ignored in “traditional” research methods, and whose stories too often go unheard. For example, our approach allows us to gain authentic insights on a variety of issues by hearing the voices of people from men who are homeless in Baltimore to the elderly in Appalachia to millennials in California. We leave assumptions behind and listen deeply to people’s concerns, worldviews, and experiences.

Justice across many lines

While race continues to be the most profound divider in our country, there are also other important factors—gender, class, sexual orientation, disability and so forth—that can lead to exclusion, limiting people’s opportunities, power and life chances. The Topos approach to communications strategy and research brings in voices that often go unheard, so that advocates can work effectively toward justice across society.

This is not only the right thing to do, it is necessary to winning the culture change we seek.

SCOPE OF WORK

Note that the following is a starting point for conversation. We would work collaboratively with you to develop the actual work plan that would best meet your objectives. We have found that co-creating how we will work together ensures that our partnership will be successful because we adapt to what our partners need rather than impose a process upon them.

At this point, we believe the following research process would be most useful.

Advisory Council – projects like these always benefit from a core group of committed advisors who can inform the research objectives, react to findings, and be the first disseminators of the strategy. Ideally, 5-7 advisors representing a range of stakeholders would agree to inform the project.

Landscape Analysis – rather than reinvent the wheel, we try to build on what is already known. We would, with advisors’ help, gather relevant research, media coverage, etc., to inform the investigation.

Exploratory Research – Topos values conversation-based research to allow us to find answers to questions we didn’t know to ask. For this project, we recommend **Cognitive elicitations** as the exploratory research method. Cognitive elicitations are in-depth interviews using an

approach adapted from psychological anthropology. These conversations are not about collecting explicit opinions; instead they identify default perspectives (and omissions) as participants think aloud about a topic. This kind of research tells us what obstacles our communications have to maneuver as well as what opportunities we have in current public thinking. We would conduct roughly 20-25 cognitive elicitations across a diverse group of Oregonians.

Conceptual Message Development – the insights from exploratory research will lead to a number of hypotheses for the kind of conversation that will make a difference, the basic conceptual direction. To test these ideas, we would recommend either small group discussions or a form of ethnography called ethnography field testing. These are open-end conversations that test particular message concepts and/or explanations esp. about how to pay for the program. The focus of this stage of research is to learn how people hear and understand particular conceptual directions. Are people hearing what we think we're saying? In either small group discussions, or ethnographic field testing, we would talk with a diverse group of roughly 50-60 Oregonians

Message Refinement – once the conceptual direction is clear, we have a number of choices about the best way to express a particular idea. For this, we turn to a method such as Talkback Testing – an approach unique to the Topos Partnership. In this method, each participant is exposed to a single core idea (a paragraph of roughly 100 words), and testing focuses first on whether the message that is heard is the one that was intended – and additionally on whether particular terms stick, whether a given idea is helpful for pushing back against opposition or inspiring action, and other questions. The essence of the approach is that participants are asked to remember and talk about the idea in their own words – a surprisingly difficult measure of success, far tougher than simple “agreement.” Depending on final budget, Talkback testing can be done as a qualitative method or a quantitative one. In this particular budget, we are assuming that we'd test 6-8 refined messages with 20 people each.

We believe we can accomplish this scope of work for roughly \$100,000 in about 4 months. Again, this is a starting point for discussion and we would welcome an opportunity to roll up our sleeves with you and develop a course of action that makes sense.

In closing, we believe that our breadth of knowledge, expertise and our unique approach to narrative make us an ideal partner for this work. Topos has experience in a very broad range of social issue topics, cultural contexts and political environments. We are committed to the values of racial justice, cultural competence and the primacy of wisdom within communities. We welcome dynamic collaborations with experts and partners who bring knowledge, skills and connections that strengthen our work. In sum, we see this project as playing to all of the strengths, capabilities and personal commitments of the Topos team, and we would be thrilled to be your partner in this important effort.

METHODS DESCRIPTIONS

While we have outlined a suggested Scope of Work, we strongly believe in creating the final workplan in partnership with our clients. That in mind, we include brief descriptions of all of our unique methods.

In order to make progress on immensely challenging problems, Topos relies heavily on a variety of conversation-based approaches. Only by talking to people can we delve into a) the less conscious aspects of thinking, b) aspects of the issue that hadn't been anticipated, c) the normal back-and-forth dynamics that characterize how people think, and d) the influence of life experience, worldviews and values. We have innovated new methods that allow us to get insights others miss.

Media framing analysis: To better understand the public dialog around a given issue, Topos often conducts an assessment of how media coverage might reflect, and influence, broad patterns of thinking. Reviewing and analyzing a diverse set of, say, 100 pieces from media sources (newspapers, blogs, broadcast transcripts, social media posts, etc.) we ask questions such as: How are key issues framed? Which aspects of the topic are ignored? Which are exaggerated or misrepresented? What are the likely impacts on the cultural common sense? What are the opportunities to introduce more constructive language and storylines?

Ethnography occurs in natural settings – in the workplace, in stores, homes, the community and even (during COVID) via Zoom. Anthropologists have dozens of conversations sometimes recruiting people on the spot and sometimes holding longer conversations of up to an hour. Ethnography allows us to highlight particular communities, and to elicit particularly authentic responses from people who might not participate in other forms of research.

Cognitive elicitations are in-depth interviews using an approach adapted from psychological anthropology. These conversations are not about collecting explicit opinions; instead they identify default perspectives (and omissions) as participants think aloud about a topic from a variety of angles, some of which are deliberately surprising so as not to merely trigger familiar “talking points.” Our experienced team of anthropologists and linguists will conduct, transcribe and analyze the interviews for linguistic patterns, models, terms, and so on.

Talkback testing: At the heart of a strong narrative is a simple, easily embraced idea that people can readily communicate to others. Talkback testing – an approach unique to the Topos Partnership – allows us to determine which ideas are clear, engaging, easily remembered and able to shift attitudes in constructive directions. In this method, each participant is exposed to a single core idea (a paragraph of roughly 100 words), and testing focuses first on whether the message that is heard is the one that was intended – and additionally on whether particular terms stick, whether a given idea is helpful for pushing back against opposition or inspiring action, and other questions. The essence of the approach is that participants are asked to remember and talk about the idea in their own words – a surprisingly difficult measure of success, far tougher than simple “agreement” in a survey.

Virtual Community Forum (Qualboard) brings together roughly 15-25 people who participate over a period of several days in an asynchronous, online discussion. Participants respond to a variety of different questions, requests and materials, including video, and can markup documents in detail. The approach allows both individual reactions and group interaction, top-of-mind thoughts as well as considered reactions as people think about issues over several days. Clients are able to witness the VCFs from a virtual backroom, which some have found to be quite addictive!

Journaling: Most researchers rely solely on methods that require brief, one-time interactions with participants. We have found that adding a longitudinal perspective into the mix of methods has great utility in getting us past the "conventional wisdom" about the issue. As participants consider ideas over an extended period, we can move beyond default, surface opinions, to ideas that are less top-of-mind, but very relevant to real-world motivation and behavior. Journaling allows us to have an extended conversation in which participants are given the chance to delve steadily deeper into the topic. We provide questions to consider and tasks to perform over a period of days or even weeks. As our learning progresses, we adapt the questioning to the insights that emerge – getting deeper over time.

Grassroots-run research: Topos has developed unique collaborations with grassroots organizations to partner in field research. Topos trains organization representatives in group moderating and helps to develop the discussion guide. The organization representatives lead in recruiting and moderating group discussions, and then Topos provides analysis. These unique partnerships are resulting in great outcomes.

Small-Group Telephone Conversations: In the small-group setting, participants join a researcher on the phone for approximately 30 minutes, and respond to materials and to each other. The process allows researchers to learn about both individual responses to messages, and importantly, how ideas fare in the course of an interaction – e.g. whether certain ideas stick as important touch points that participants return to. Importantly, these conversations allow for open-ended exploration of current, default attitudes, as well as responses to various message strategies. Small phone group discussions avoid the “group-think” downsides of larger groups, and allow us to quickly and flexibly conduct research as new questions, insights and hypotheses emerge.

Argument Lab is a new method we developed to identify the key rhetorical points that rise to the top in controversial topics. The method is based on one-on-one exchanges between a researcher and a participant, where the goal is to arrive at compelling statements through a process of friendly debate. While researchers are careful to keep the exchanges constructive, the method also takes advantage of the freedom people feel in online exchanges to take strong or unpopular positions, and to honestly reflect their feelings rather than repeat expected points. In this way, we uncover problematic opposition ideas people struggle to overcome as well as the most strongly embraced points on our side.

Interviews with stakeholders: In order to collect the relevant perspectives of potential voices on the issue, to build buy-in for the communications effort, and to identify red flags associated with particular approaches, Topos frequently conducts a round of interviews with key leaders, stakeholders, and even legislators, typically identified and recruited by the client organization or coalition. Topics for the conversations include possible narratives for talking about the issue (i.e. civic engagement), challenges experienced in communicating with audiences, and policy priorities. Part of what we look for in these in-depth interviews are the ideas that guide their thinking, and therefore should be considered for testing with the broader public.

Quantitative: While the emphasis in this section has been on qualitative or quasi-quantitative methods (like Talkback), we also provide a full suite of quantitative methods to understand existing views, how views can shift, and measurements of actions in response to stimuli both in the lab and in the field.

- Online and phone surveys
- Dial test surveys
- Frame experiment surveys
- Talkback-style surveys
- Segmentation surveys
- Ad testing, including in-field testing

“Before/after” video

Finally, one of the most compelling and clarifying tools for sharing recommendations with colleagues and stakeholders is a brief video illustrating default responses to the topic (“before”), contrasted with more engaged and on-target responses after exposure to a recommended framing approach emerging from the research (“afters”). These videos typically last 3 to 4 minutes and consist of excerpts from video-recorded conversations with research participants. Before/after videos of this type have been valuable, compelling deliverables.

Public comment from Charlie Swanson

SB 1089 contains another section besides the values and principles highlighted in meeting materials that provides a portion of the required ethical foundation for the system the Governance Board is to propose. Section 2 (2) on pp. 2-3 of [SB 1089](#) states the following (with at least the yellow highlighted points as part of an ethical foundation) –

- (2) The Universal Health Plan Governance Board established in section 1 of this 2023 Act shall create a comprehensive plan to finance and administer a Universal Health Plan that is responsive to the needs and expectations of the residents of this state by:
 - (a) Improving the health status of individuals, families and communities;
 - (b) Defending against threats to the health of the residents of this state;
 - (c) Protecting individuals from the financial consequences of ill health;
 - (d) Providing equitable access to person-centered care;
 - (e) Removing cost as a barrier to accessing health care;
 - (f) Removing any financial incentive for a health care practitioner to provide care to one patient rather than another;
 - (g) Making it possible for individuals to participate in decisions affecting their health and the health system;
 - (h) Establishing measurable health care goals and guidelines that align with other state and federal health standards;
 - (i) Promoting continuous quality improvement and fostering interorganizational collaboration; and
 - (j) Focusing on coverage of evidence-based health care and services.

Dr. Chi's comments related to the timeline of the output of the ethical foundations work group are very important. The statement of ethical foundations can likely be completed in a few months, but operationalizing them will take time. For example, for some of the elements (e.g. – coverage of new procedures or medications), the Governance Board proposal will likely have to define a structure to do ongoing work once the system is operating. How the people are chosen to do that ongoing work and how those people gather necessary public input may not be easily definable until more of the plan is formulated.

May 18, 2024

Members and Staff of UHPGB

Thank you for incorporating ethical principles and standards when designing and implementing a Universal Health Promotion and Treatment Plan. That approach is very gratifying to me.

I have attached a paper--Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. People and groups from Jewish background may have additional principles as the Jewish religion emphasizes social justice more than most.

Questions: 1) Are you making access a guiding principle. For example, does access mean subsidized rural hospitals and clinics say every 50 miles, incentives for health care professionals to practice in rural areas, etc. 2) Will there be mechanisms to support and enhance the dignity of patients, care givers, etc. 3) How would the principle of subsidiarity mentioned in the "Constructive Role for Government" section be incorporated?

Suggestion: The Healthcare for All Oregon organization has a "Faith Caucus" that might be a resource in your effort.

Again, I applaud your effort to include Ethical Principles in the design and implementation of the plan.

Attached is my card which includes my contact information which needs updating to include my new email address:

Sincerely,


Don Klosterman

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Human Dignity

Belief in the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for a moral vision for society.

The principle of human dignity is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image of God. The person is the clearest reflection of God among us. We are required to honor the human person, to give priority to the person.

Community and the Common Good

In a culture driven by excessive individualism, our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society.

How we organize our society -- in economics and politics, in law and policy -- directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The obligation to "love our neighbor" has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.

Rights and Responsibilities

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency – starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities -- to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test of society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation.

The option for the poor is a perspective that examines personal decisions, policies of private and public institutions, and economic relationships in terms of their effects on the poor - those who lack the minimum necessities of nutrition, housing, education, and health care. Those who are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all.

The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbor as one's self. The option for the poor is an essential part of society's effort to achieve the common good. A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society.

Participation

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community.

It is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society. In the words of the U.S. bishops, "The ultimate injustice is for a person or group to be treated actively or abandoned passively as if they were non-members of the human race. To treat people this way is effectively to say they simply do not count as human beings."

Dignity of Work/Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. They also have a fundamental right to organize and join unions.

People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these rights have limits. No one is allowed to amass excessive wealth when others lack the basic necessities of life.

Stewardship of Creation

Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. The goods of the earth are gifts from God, intended for the benefit of all.

We humans are not the ultimate owners of these goods, but rather, the temporary stewards. We are entrusted with the responsibility of caring for these gifts and preserving them for future generations.

Global Solidarity

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Solidarity means that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

John Paul II has called solidarity a virtue. It is the virtue, he says, by which we demonstrate "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good ... because we are all really responsible for all."

Constructive Role for Government

Because we are social beings, the state is natural to the person. Therefore, the state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good.

One of the key functions of government is to assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibility to others in society. Since, in a large and complex society these responsibilities cannot adequately be carried out on a one-to-one basis, citizens need the help of government in fulfilling these responsibilities and promoting the common good.

According to the principle of subsidiarity, the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. If they cannot, then a higher level of government should intervene to provide help.

Promotion of Peace

Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, "Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements."

There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.